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Sent: Thur 4/14/2016 1:37:21 PM
Subject: FW: News Clips (PFOA)

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Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2016 8:09 AM
To: R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff) <R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov>
Subject: News Clips (PFOA)

Lawmakers Urge PFOA Advisory Level Update

By Howard Weiss-Tisman

Vermont Public Radio

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

New England lawmakers are urging the Environmental Protection Agency to issue an updated health advisory level for the chemical PFOA.

The suspected carcinogen has been found in water in Pownal and Bennington in Vermont, as well as in New York and New Hampshire.

In 2009 the EPA set its safety limit at 400 parts per trillion, but new studies on the danger of the chemical has forced the EPA to update its health advisory.

Katie Thomas, an environmental policy advisor for Senator Bernie Sanders, says the EPA has indicated that it might drop its advisory level to 100 parts per trillion.

Vermont set its standard level at 20 parts per trillion.

"We're working with the EPA to find out when the health advisory will be updated more officially," Thomas says. "We want to see whether that standard will be lowered below 100 parts per trillion."

When EPA determines that drinking supplies are contaminated with PFOA over the advisory level, the agency recommends actions to reduce exposure.

In 2014, EPA said people should not consume water that exceeds its provisional health advisory for PFOA.

The agency says short term exposure may cause adverse health effects.

New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen met with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy this week to discuss the PFOA contamination in her state. Shaheen says the water contamination deserves an urgent response from the federal agency.

“Communities in New Hampshire must be able to trust their water supply,” Shaheen said in a news release. “Today, I had a productive conversation with Administrator McCarthy and received assurances that she was marshaling federal resources to provide these communities with timely and thoroughly researched information.”

EPA is evaluating PFOA as a drinking water contaminant in accordance with the process that was established by the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The Agency included PFOA on the third “Contaminant Candidate List” (CCL) published by the EPA in 2009 and the fourth draft CCL published in 2015.

The CCL is a list of contaminants that are known or anticipated to occur in drinking water that may require regulation.

The agency uses the CCL to identify priority contaminants for regulatory decision-making and information collection.

The agency also included PFOA among the contaminants water systems are required to monitor for in accordance with the third Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) published on May 2, 2012.

Following the 2012 rule, the EPA tested 10 municipal water supplies around Vermont, and all of those tests came back negative for PFOA.

The water systems tested following the 2012 rule include Bennington, Barre City, Brattleboro, Burlington, Jay Peak Basin Complex, Lyndonville, Rutland City, Shaftsbury, South Burlington and Winhall Stratton Fire District 1.

EPA spokesman Dave Deegan says the agency could go further than issuing a health advisory.

He says the EPA will consider the occurrence data from UCMR 3, along with the peer reviewed health effects assessment supporting the PFOA Health Advisory, to make a regulatory determination on whether to initiate the process to develop a national primary drinking water regulation.

“EPA is using the best science to develop a lifetime health advisory level for PFOA, which the agency expects to release in spring 2016,” Deegan said. “When issued, the lifetime health advisory for PFOA will supersede the provisional health advisory of 400 parts per trillion for PFOA issued in 2009.”

State and local officials load boxes of free bottled water Monday April 11, 2016, in Litchfield, N.H. Residents were given the water after wells located near their homes were found to be contaminated. (AP Photo/Jim Cole) ap photograph

Assembly hearings on Hoosick Falls canceled, for now

Politico

By Scott Waldman

Apr. 14, 2016

ALBANY — Proposed state hearings on the Hoosick Falls water crisis appear to have been scuttled.

The state Assembly was scheduled to hold water quality hearings this month, but nothing is on the calendar and Democratic lawmakers can't say if they'll ever be scheduled. The hearings, proposed by a bipartisan group of lawmakers in February, would have had a broader statewide focus, centering on clean water and water infrastructure in the state. But they also would have included a probe into Hoosick Falls, where a toxic chemical used in manufacturing non-stick materials poisoned the municipal water source in the town of 4,000. The story prompted a cascade of criticism of the state for its handling of the situation.

Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin, who represents Hoosick Falls, said he was concerned his constituents were used as leverage during closed-door state budget negotiations between the governor, the Assembly speaker, and the Senate majority leader.

"If in fact the Assembly majority is now backing away from hearings that they previously agreed to after the budget, then it sure seems to be me that they are getting pressured," said McLaughlin, a Republican. "It seems they had no interest in doing them and they were doing this as a lever in the budget negotiations, or they got pressure from the second floor."

Cuomo administration spokesman Richard Azzopardi said that the administration had nothing to do with calling off the possible hearings.

The hearings would have proved sensitive for the Cuomo administration, which has received extensive criticism for its handling of the water crisis. The hearings likely would have required officials from the state health department to speak about their response. The state health department knew about the PFOA contamination, which is linked to cancer and other serious ailments, but failed to warn residents from drinking the water for more than a year.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, known for showing up on the scene of catastrophes, avoided making a trip to Hoosick Falls for more than three months as the criticism mounted. The state recently declared the municipal water supply safe to drink after the installation of a temporary filter, though hundreds of homes on private wells have still not been cleared to use the state-installed filters in their homes.

In February, Democratic Assemblyman Steve Englebright of Long Island, chair of the environmental conservation committee, joined with Democratic Assemblyman Richard Gottfried of Manhattan, chair of the health committee, to call for the hearings. At the time, they issued a statement saying "the recent events in Flint, Michigan, and most recently in Hoosick Falls

highlight the threats to water purity and need to be scrutinized.”

The Cuomo administration was particularly sensitive about the mention of Flint, where government malfeasance led to extensive lead poisoning across the entire city. An Assembly spokesman received complaints from Cuomo staffers soon after the hearings were announced for mentioning Hoosick Falls and Flint in the same sentence.

This week, lawmakers walked back their statements calling the hearings necessary, though they still left open the door to holding meetings later in the session. Englebright said the upcoming legislative election would make it harder to schedule hearings. He also questioned the need for the hearings and said the budget agreement included \$1.5 million for water quality testing around the state. He said an education program would be a more effective use of time.

“It’s isn’t as if we’re at the same place we were two months ago when this looked like we were staring into a chasm with an ether of unknowns. We now know more, should we do discovery is still an open question. I don’t know what there is to discover at this point.”

Gottfried would only say he could not “speculate” on whether or not the hearings would ever be held.

Sen. Kathy Marchione of Halfmoon, a Republican who represents the area, said she does not support hearings right now, but wants to wait for the results of blood testing of Hoosick Falls residents by the state Department of Health.

“I want to hear what is happening with the Department of Health and the blood tests, which no results have come out yet. I want to go through that process and take a look and then we’ll see whether or not there are hearings necessary,” she said.

Environmental groups also saw the hearings as a way to highlight the need for clean water funding throughout the state, which faces tens of billions of dollars in infrastructure costs over the next two decades.

“Even as families in Hoosick Falls are told their water is safe to drink, the supply remains contaminated,” said Liz Moran, water and natural resources associate at Environmental Advocates of New York. “Fears aren’t limited to Hoosick Falls, nor is it limited to PFOA. This is a statewide issue that requires the Legislature’s expertise. If there was ever a pressing need for hearings, this is it.”

Hundreds with private wells in Hoosick Falls still can’t drink the water

Politico

By Scott Waldman

Apr. 13, 2016

ALBANY — More than 600 homeowners in Hoosick Falls still cannot drink the water there.

Over the past few months, the state has overseen the installation of 652 water treatment systems in homes with polluted wells, but just 16 of those systems have been cleared for use, state officials said Tuesday. As many as 100 could be working by the end of next week, they said.

State officials would only speak on background about the reason for the delay, but acknowledged “bumps along the way” and said carbon needed for use in filters had to be shipped in from other parts of the country because of the rapid rollout.

The local water supply in the Rensselaer County village has been contaminated with the toxic chemical perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, which has been linked to a nearby factory that manufactures non-stick products. The state declared the factory, owned by Saint-Gobain, a Superfund site after the federal Environmental Protection Agency warned residents late last year not to consume the water.

The municipal water supply was cleared for use two weeks ago after a temporary water treatment system was installed in February. A permanent water treatment system is expected by the end of the year.

Homeowners with private wells have experienced ongoing problems, however.

Department of Environmental Conservation spokeswoman Emily DeSantis said clearing those homes is an “ongoing process.”

“After rigorous testing to ensure that each residential water filtration system is working effectively in removing PFOA, NYS DEC has recently started to notify homeowners that their filtration systems are cleared for use,” DeSantis said in a statement. “This is an ongoing process, and we continue to work aggressively to clear each and every home that has received a POET system installation.”

One resident, Michelle Baker, said DEC officials and contractors hired by the state have been to her home 11 times since January for the well treatment system and have tested it on three separate occasions.

She said people in town whose homes are not connected to the municipal water supply feel the Cuomo administration has failed them, as they still can’t get mortgages since their water systems are not cleared for use.

Meanwhile, Baker said, she continues to worry about her daughter’s health from drinking the water.

“I’ve missed so much time from work, I’m so concerned,” she said. “It’s very upsetting to just keep going through this over and over again and not know if there is a cancer-causing agent in my home.”

On Tuesday, state officials could not put a timeline on when all of the private treatment systems would be cleared for use.

The state is paying \$10 million toward private well treatment systems for Hoosick Falls, as well as some other treatment systems. The Cuomo administration expects that money will be repaid

by Saint-Gobain as well as Honeywell, which previously owned the factory. Water bottles at St. Mary's Academy in Hoosick Falls. (AP Photo/Mike Groll)

Some in Hoosick Falls won't drink water despite clearance by DEC

By Lindsay Nielsen

April 13, 2016, 6:22 pm

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – The NYS DEC said the municipal water in Hoosick Falls is safe to drink, but not everybody there is convinced.

Some residents are still waiting on their water testing results, and they said they won't drink the water until then. And those with private wells are still waiting to hear if they can drink their water again.

"There's a big push for the village to have independent testing as well," Hoosick resident Amy Breese said.

Breese is still waiting to hear from the state if she can drink water from her private well again weeks after the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation installed a carbon filtration system. But Breese supports many people in the village of Hoosick Falls who are still getting bottled water and refusing to drink the municipal water.

"Send out some samples to labs and just make sure," Breese said.

Christine Holzhauer, of Hoosick, is also waiting to hear if her water is safe to drink again. She said her carbon filtration system was installed over a month ago.

"It's been a nightmare," she said.

Holzhauer said the DEC has taken two water samples so far.

"One was to go to California – the first one," she said. "This one they just recently took was to go to Albany. I cannot get no results from the very first on they took."

Holzhauer said the state has been to her home eight times to take water samples, and she still can't drink the water.

A DEC spokesperson released the following statement on Wednesday:

Before residents are advised to drink their water, the state not only performs PFOA testing of the water but, out of an abundance of caution, goes above and beyond to extensively test for 17 other contaminants. This additional testing provides residents with a complete picture of their private well and involves a complicated laboratory analysis that takes weeks to complete.

"It's like we're being left in limbo out here," Holzhauer said.

To date, the DEC said 31 homeowners are cleared for use and up to 100 homeowners are slated for clearance by the end of the week. NEWS10 ABC asked the Hoosick Falls mayor about independent testing but did not receive a response.

State expands PFOA testing into Manchester, Londonderry and Bedford

By KIMBERLY HOUGHTON

Union Leader Correspondent

4/13/16

MERRIMACK — State officials are expanding the radius of private wells being tested to 1.5 miles from Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics after new test results indicate additional water contamination in southern New Hampshire.

An additional 200 private wells in Manchester, Londonderry and Bedford will now be tested for potential perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA. To date, 232 private wells have been sampled in Merrimack and Litchfield, with contamination detected in both towns.

Jim Martin, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services public information officer, said Wednesday that 161 water sample tests have been returned from the laboratory.

Previously, there were 26 contaminated wells. Now DES says they have discovered a total of 41 contaminated wells — one in Manchester, seven in Merrimack and 33 in Litchfield. All of those families have been notified and are receiving bottled water, according to Martin.

“We are formally expanding the testing radius to 1.5 miles based on the latest round of test results,” he said. “We still have some more results to come in.”

DES is currently waiting for results from about 70 private water well samples from Merrimack and Litchfield.

One private well along the Daniel Webster Highway in Merrimack has detected about 1,600 parts per trillion of PFOA — nearly double the highest prior amount of 830 ppt directly across from the Saint-Gobain plant.

Martin said the well showing 1,600 ppt is in the same vicinity, but is not a drinking water well.

“It is for outdoor use only,” Martin said, explaining the well is used as an outdoor faucet for hoses. The property actually utilizes the public water system, Merrimack Village District, he said.

A new test result also discovered an additional private well in Merrimack along the Daniel Webster Highway with 600 ppt of PFOA, which is above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s advisory level of 400 ppt.

The state provides bottled water when levels reach 100 ppt.

Currently, there are 200 families in Merrimack and Litchfield receiving bottled water because of recently detected PFOA contamination, which has been linked to about three different kinds of cancer and other illnesses.

Martin said that a Merrimack well that previously detected 820 ppt was re-tested and showed 1,000 ppt.

"We are mailing postcards to those (properties) in that 1.5-mile radius, making sure that they are aware," he explained.

Manchester, Londonderry

The neighborhoods in Manchester that fall within that radius—including Lilac Court, Surrey Lane, Goebel, Trolley and Gantry streets along with Barbara Lane—are located in Ward 8 at the southern tip of the city, near the Litchfield border.

Ward 8 Alderman Tom Katsiantonis said he spoke with Manchester Water Works Director Phil Croasdale, who estimated six to eight homes in the affected area draw drinking water from private wells.

"Most of the homes there are on city water," said Katsiantonis. "I did receive one email from a concerned resident, and Water Works will be contacting them to see what can be done."

In Londonderry, Town Manager Kevin Smith said his community has been very proactive about getting as much information on the water situation as possible. Now that some Londonderry properties are included in the expanded testing radius, Smith said the town feels prepared to address the needs and concerns of residents.

"We are taking it as it comes. I wouldn't say that we are worried at this point," Smith said on Wednesday. "We are glad DES, out of an abundance of caution, is expanding the testing area. If there is contamination, we want to know about it."

PFOA Area of Investigation

Smith was unsure of the exact number of properties that will be tested, but said they are in the western area of town. While most of that land is conservation space, there are some neighborhoods on Litchfield Road in Londonderry that may be affected, Smith said. Those property owners will receive postcards informing them of the situation.

New test results of the Merrimack Village District public water supply indicated PFOA at lower levels of 8.5 ppt to 90 ppt, according to the newest data provided. These public wells are being tested on a weekly basis, according to Martin.

Martin said no decision has been made on whether bottled water will be provided to residents within the newly expanded testing area. As of now, bottled water is being provided to residents within the one-mile radius, in addition to properties on about a dozen roadways in Litchfield.

Anyone living within the 1.5 mile-radius from Saint-Gobain may register online to have their well

sampled at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NHDES-S-03-008>.

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